
A bid to reduce street crime across Malaysia has hit a stumbling block after dozens of volunteers were turned down because they were overweight. Fewer than a third of those who wanted to join the police in patrolling crime hotspots were accepted. Robin Brant reports:

Malaysia's Prime Minister, Najib Razak, announced **ambitious targets** last week **to tackle** street crime. He wants a 20% fall **by this time next year**. Retired policemen are being brought back and members of Malaysia's people's volunteer **corps** are being **enlisted** to fight on the frontline. They'll join police on street patrols.

The problem is though, most of the first **batch** were not **considered up to it**. Of 500 **volunteers** who were sent for assessment, just 142 were fit enough. The rest were too fat, unfit or had what the head of the corps told an English language newspaper was 'poor **overall presentation and grooming**'. Corps members wear military uniforms but most of them are unpaid volunteers with limited powers.

Street crime, particularly **mugging**, is seen as a serious problem in Malaysia's major cities. The opposition has called for the country's top policeman to be replaced because of the failure **to tackle** the issue.

Robin Brant, BBC News, Kuala Lumpur

Vocabulary and definitions

ambitious targets	aims or goals which need a great amount of effort to be achieved or be successful
to tackle	to deal with, to fight; to resolve
by this time next year	this common phrase and its variations are used to refer to the same point in time during a future period of time - here, the beginning of August of the year 2010 (other examples: by this time next week/next month/tomorrow etc.)
corps	a military unit trained to perform a particular duty
enlisted	enrolled/registered for service in the armed forces
batch	here, group of people
considered up to it	thought capable of patrolling the streets
volunteers	people who do something willingly/of their own accord, without being forced or paid to do it
overall presentation and grooming	combination of upbringing, education and training that informs your looks and behaviour, often determining how other people perceive you
mugging	attacking and robbing somebody in a public place

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